

Rainier Beach Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NAC)

MEETING SUMMARY

July 20, 2011 6:30 pm-8:30 pm

Southeast Seattle Senior Center

4655 South Holly Street, 98118

Attendees

NAC Members:

Cheryl dos-Remedios, Christie Coxley, David Sauvion, Guyanthony Parramore, Harry Hoffman, Katy Curtis, Margaret Yellowwolf, Mohamed Hassan, Peter Masundire, Robert West "Trey", Rodolfo Castillo, Vallerie Fisher.

Guest: Councilmember Sally Clark

City Staff: Nora Liu (DPD), Sebat Tenna (DON), David Goldberg (DPD)

Agenda review

- Councilmember O'Brien was not able to attend.
- The 6:45pm session with CM Clark will be facilitated by Cheryl.

Councilmember Sally Clark

- NAC members were interested in CM Clark's input on how to move the recommendations from the plan update forward.
 - CM Clark stated she lives in the area and is familiar with the area and had worked on implementation of the SE Seattle area plan as a Neighborhood Development Manager at the city.
 - Many of the recommendations will be too large to be done entirely with city department funds. Community must be committed to finding opportunities and urging the city to take advantage of opportunities. Need to find more private partners to move plans forward.
 - Need to convince private developers to take risks in Southeast. Having functional community and business groups in the area helps to get developers interested.
 - Smaller projects can be done more easily with various city funding sources, such as Matching Fund, etc.
- Two biggest landowners in the area are the School District and the City. How can we better engage the school district and encourage them to share their assets with the community? Meeting rooms, playfields, etc.
 - CM Clark: This conversation has been going on for a long time. It's like there is an invisible force field keeping the community out.
 - Alliance for Education took trip to New York to see how the schools-community model operated. Density forced coordination between them; here it is not as dense.
 - Rainier Beach Neighborhood Plan had goals of life-long learning and community use of schools. Would be great to have a community college in Rainier Beach.

- Nora: Is there effort at City Council to engage School District in partnership?
 - CM Clark: In the past couple of years depth of issues were covered and conversation has improved. Have been working with them on such issues as re-use of schools, use permit, Memorial Stadium and Mercer garage, hiring of interim superintendent and ethics system. Have not been in discussion with them around neighborhood assignments south of ship canal.
- NAC member: Seems like we need two school districts, as north and south Seattle are so different. What structure exists for NAC to have conversations with developers?
 - CM Clark: North and South of Union Street seem to be two districts. Concerns of south are around teachers, schools, and Rainier Beach High School.
 - Need strong neighborhood groups to remain involved. City staff and Mayors change so often, need neighborhood to take lead. Neighborhoods that had strong community councils tended to hold on longer to plan stewardships, those without have had a more difficult time.
 - Need to keep items in the plan in front of departments/mayor. There was a box on NMF/Neighborhood Street Fund and some capital budgets asking if the project is part of a neighborhood plan.
- Nora: Area is culturally and economically diverse. What does it take to build a strong stewardship group that embraces this diversity?
 - NAC member: RB Community Empowerment Coalition might provide a good model to follow as it has Town Halls that attract a diverse group.
 - CM Clark: Used to be an annual pancake breakfast in Columbia City. Issues were discussed relating to improvements to the area. Small teams took various project assignments related to their interests.
- NAC member: Originally from Somalia where there is nothing like this. Ideas have not changed much from those in the original plan. We should look at items that have not yet been completed from the plan. Ethnic media is best way to get information out to community. With shutdown of SCAN, the ethnic television option was eliminated. East African community would be willing to take this back and run.
 - CM Clark: So many useful services were facing cuts: libraries, community centers, police, etc. I have not heard that SCAN was cutting this programming. I will check into it.
 - With regard to plan updates – City wanted to give neighborhoods the opportunity to review original plans and see what needed updating. Some items in the original plans were too general.....this is a good opportunity to further define specific needs that city departments can work on.
- NAC member: Can South Seattle Community College be brought into the public school system for facility use when students are not using?
 - CM Clark: Perhaps partnership with South Lake. Some students could utilize this partnership. Partnership could also be with Rainier Beach High.
- NAC member: Could we reach out to larger businesses to encourage them to create an entrepreneurial curriculum for schools?
 - CM Clark: Community has always been interested in business incubation centers. Difficult as we are not sure what businesses are looking for.

NAC follow-up discussion:

- Good to hear this information....good to go from big picture outlook to concrete projects that can be done.

- Need to identify obstacles and how to overcome. We may need to ask city for more assistance. Moving to stewardship model may be difficult.
- Representatives from different organizations will need to come together to draft a list of projects and create subcommittees to work on them.
- People are more likely to volunteer around a project; good to have a paid staff person to lead up. Rainier Beach Empowerment Coalition is probably the best place to house this; perhaps with a planning subgroup.
- Would it be possible to undertake some of this work at the 4th community meeting?
 - Nora/David: Yes, that is what the last meeting is for.

Consultant Scope of Work

- The consultant's work will help in looking to possibly find large grant to support big community vision projects.
- From the last community workshop, the following are some of the responses that stood out:
 - Places of worship stood out as community strength. Perhaps consultant could work on bringing various groups together.
 - Community also mentioned strengthening mom and pop businesses and youth issues.
- NAC members discussed issue of gentrification:
 - Rainier Beach is only area of Seattle that has not lost Black population. Uncertain whether current Black population has remained stable due to African immigrants.
 - Housing around Othello Station attracting higher income residents to area. Want to assist residents of Rainier Beach to increase income, not import higher income residents from other areas of Seattle or from outside.
- The draft for Rainier Beach consultant included two options:
 - *Shared Multi-cultural Community Center*. To start capacity building with communities interested in shared operation and ownership of a shared multi-cultural community center. Would help diverse communities come together and work on common concerns.
 - *Community Development*. Build and strengthen community capacity across cultures, economic lines, ideally linked to economic development and youth development strategies – so that the community can stand strong in the face of gentrification pressures.
- NAC members' discussion on the '*multi-cultural Community Center*' included:
 - UW Student Studio is already working on planning for multi-cultural center. This could provide the vision around the idea.
 - A new building is easy to get behind, but need to do a good job with maintenance and programming.
 - A huge capital campaign takes a lot of energy and could lead to burnout. Should look at what we already have and what we can do with it.
 - Current facilities are underutilized by community.
 - Need to be sure that the community is aware of what is available.
 - Would be very useful if could gain access to public spaces.

- Can form partnerships utilizing existing places.
- A community building is a really big project. Makes sense to start small and have a quick success to show the community. Maybe it could be smaller parts of larger vision.
- Want to be careful not to duplicate efforts already underway by Rainer Beach Neighborhood Association.
- Organizations could partner around the project.
- Need to think into the future.
 - Can all cultures feel comfortable using the same facilities?
 - There are religious/cultural differences. Who will be in charge of these things?

Decision postponed until a subgroup discusses how to go forward. Ideas will have to be voted on electronically, as time is running out on decision. Nora will email members to arrange time and place with those interested and able to meet. Discussion will continue online.

Next Steps

- City staff will be working with NAC on recommendations related to priorities emerging from Phase II meetings.
- Some themes seen emerging from meetings held so far include economic development and small business development, youth employment and Light Rail development.
 - Will be working with Office of Economic Development on ideas. Also will look at zoning, etc. Will look at physical aspects of linkages.
- In September, will want to have the basics of a plan put together.
- In the fall, will be looking to build bridges between plan and community organizations. Need to build ownership of the plan.
- Will look to NAC members to begin to bring community organization members to next community meeting.
- NAC member suggested:
 - Another group be formed around involving community organizations in the plan update process.
 - To go around the table to give comments on themes from workshops, etc. Things seem to be moving too quickly. Community feels NAC has general rather than specific ideas.

Wrap Up

- Broadview/Bitter Lake/Haller Lake NAC is having a picnic at Carkee Park on August 4, 2011. They have extended invitation to join them; or may decide to hold own picnic.
- NAC member expressed feeling they don't have enough time on the agenda and not enough time for real in-depth discussion. Would like more frequent and earlier e-mails on items for discussion and agendas.
- NAC member stated need to value input gathered from POLs. Feel like now we are heading in another direction.

NAC members decided to include Trey and Guyanthony in seated membership position replacing Paul and Matt who resigned.